

**A Sketch of the Western District
of Upper Canada
being
the Southern extremity of that
interesting Province**

**BY
WILLIAM McCORMICK ESQ'RE**

Written in 1824

EDITED BY R. ALAN DOUGLAS
CURATOR, HIRAM WALKER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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This is the first in a projected series of publications relating to the history of Essex County undertaken by the Essex County Historical Association. A primary intention of the series is to make available to the interested reader and to students of the history of Essex County material either now not readily available or not previously published. The focus will therefore be on re-issuing published material and printing documentary material. From time to time the series will include the results of new research relating to the county.

The ECHA is particularly pleased that the inaugural publication in this series is undertaken jointly with the University of Windsor Press. Acknowledgment should also be made of the financial assistance provided by Wintario.

K.G. Pryke

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WILLIAM McCORMICK
May 1784 - February 1840

Reproduced from the 1947 edition of *A Sketch of the Western District* which was privately published for the McCormick family. The present whereabouts of the portrait are unknown.

INTRODUCTION

William McCormick, the author of *A Sketch of the Western District*, was born on May 30, 1784, near the Maumee River in the Ohio country. He was the eldest son of Alexander McCormick and Elizabeth Turner, whose own remarkable careers might warrant a brief digression here.

William's father, who was born in 1728 in County Down, Ireland, journeyed to Pennsylvania, probably about 1761. Following a sojourn as a Philadelphia merchant, about 1769 he became a trader among the Indians, west of the Alleghenies. In 1771 he was in what was known as the North West Territory, the land bounded by the Mississippi and the Ohio Rivers and by Lake Erie. There he came to be so highly regarded by a band of Wyandottes that they adopted him as a brother, and the chief's sister was given to him as a wife. She later bore him a son, who subsequently accompanied McCormick to Upper Canada. For about a decade McCormick represented his Indian brothers as an interpreter and trader in their dealings with the whites at Detroit.

It was after Alexander McCormick's first wife died that he met Elizabeth Turner, a captive of a band of Chippewas, near Toledo in the fall of 1782. Elizabeth had been eighteen when captured near Pittsburg, her birthplace, while making sugar with some other young people, early in March, 1780. With her determined spirit she had speedily won the admiration of her captors, the family of the Half King, who had bestowed on her the respectful nickname Chestnut Burr.

Alexander McCormick proposed marriage to Elizabeth, but she was reluctant to accept her fifty-four year old suitor. She finally agreed to his proposal rather than become the wife of an Indian. McCormick met another obstacle, however, when his offer of a ransom was rejected by the Chippewas. Not to be balked, he kid-

napped her. Hiding her in the bottom of a boat under a load of furs, to smuggle her past the Indians' scrutiny, he took her to Detroit, where he married her in May 1783.

Detroit in 1783 was identified not only as a fur trading post closely aligned with numerous Indian bands, but also as a centre of pro-British sentiment. The ceding of the territory to the Americans in the peace treaty of 1783 seemed to spell disaster, but gradually the determination of the British (and of the fur traders) to retain their hold emerged. McCormick, himself a known Loyalist, expressed this attitude by returning to the Maumee territory, just prior to the birth of his and Elizabeth's first son, William.

Now that he had a family, Alexander McCormick acquired some 2,000 acres and established a trading post at the foot of the Maumee Rapids. However, both as a fur trader and as a Loyalist, McCormick's position gradually became more and more precarious. The Americans were resolved to throw the British out of their territory. Moreover, they blamed the British for inciting Indian resistance to American control. The climax came when American forces under General Anthony Wayne invaded the country.

McCormick's trading post was destroyed by fire, about the time his property became part of the site of the decisive Battle of Fallen Timbers in August, 1794. Recognizing the inevitable, McCormick sought refuge, and retirement, on a lot in the future Malden Township, Essex County, Upper Canada. Later he acquired 290 acres about three miles to the east in Colchester. On his death in 1803, Alexander McCormick left his son William in charge of a family that included seven younger brothers and sisters.

Little is known of William McCormick's early years but his peculiar style of writing, and spelling, would indicate that he had little formal education. Like all young

men of the period he was subject to service in the militia. It was perhaps a recognition of his ability, rather than of his social position, that in 1807, at the age of twenty-three, he was appointed as an ensign in the First Regiment of Essex Militia and in 1809 he was gazetted as a lieutenant. At about the same time he married Mary Cornwall, the daughter of John Cornwall, a Loyalist who had sat in the Legislative Assembly for Essex and Suffolk from 1797 to 1800. They had a large family, which by 1823 included Alexander, John, David, William, Robert and Lucinda. Following William McCormick's return from Ireland, Mary bore Charles in 1826, Mary in 1828, Sarah Ann in 1829, Peregrine in 1831 and, about 1834, Arthur.

With the encouragement of John Cornwall, his father-in-law, McCormick embarked on a political career in the fall of 1811, successfully campaigning for the representation of Essex in Upper Canada's sixth parliament. Early in 1812 he took the seat in the Legislature at York that, with time out during the War of 1812, was to be his for the next twelve years.

Lieutenant McCormick was wounded in the knee in an action at Frenchtown, below Detroit, in January, 1813; at the same engagement (and before being wounded, presumably) he is said to have snatched up an Indian, whom he found tomahawking an American, and thrown him bodily into a campfire. In May of that year he held the rank of captain, when he assisted in the assault on Fort Meigs.

Captured by the Americans in 1814 and released at war's end, McCormick remained active in the militia. Early in 1822 he discovered that he had been passed over for a promotion in the First Essex. In the ensuing correspondence it developed that for years preferments in the regiment had been based on error. As far back as 1807, Ensign James Gordon of Amherstburg had been

senior to Ensign McCormick by exactly one day. In 1808, however, McCormick had been mistakenly listed as a lieutenant, although he did not actually receive that rank until the following year; but someone in the adjutant general's office had seen the 1808 list, with the result that McCormick had been promoted ahead of Gordon. Gordon promptly appealed, and was granted a majority in 1822. McCormick interpreted this promotion of a rival as a personal insult, and he offered his resignation. It was not accepted, however, and the ultimate solution proved to be McCormick's promotion to major in 1823, retroactive to April 1, 1822. The intensity of the quarrel between the two over a question of rank, and the social preferment that went with it, indicated that ideas of social class were far stronger in Upper Canada than any Yankee notion of frontier equality.

McCormick's success in his dispute with Gordon was perhaps due to his political prominence in Upper Canada. In addition to being a member of the Legislative Assembly, he also represented the Western District (the judicial-municipal division comprising the present counties of Essex, Kent and Lambton, administered from Sandwich) on the Upper Canada Board of Militia Pensions.

The record of William McCormick's public life is not voluminous. It is known that in the late teens of the nineteenth century he was involved in trying to divert the location of a proposed new Western District courthouse and jail from Sandwich to Amherstburg; as a building contractor he contributed to, and actually constructed, Christ Church, Colchester; and he participated in land speculations on a substantial scale.

As the years passed it became more and more apparent that McCormick's abiding passion was not politics but the acquisition of land. He subscribed to the view that land was the mark of a man of substance. His

first major move came in 1815 when he leased Pelee¹ Island from Alexander McKee.

September 1823 was pivotal in the career of William McCormick. On the first of that month he purchased Pelee Island for £ 100 from Alexander McKee. The McKees, however, did not have clear title to the island because Alexander's father, Thomas McKee, in May 1788 had only signed a 999 year lease with chiefs of the Ottawas, in return for three bushels of Indian corn each year. The fact that the Ottawas had never ceded their title was to jeopardize, in the 1850s and 1860s, the McCormick family's claim to the island.

William McCormick might well have seen Pelee Island as a suitable site for settlement, but undoubtedly he was also attracted by the stands of oak and red cedar. At this time it was estimated that there were some 2,000 acres of low wet timbered land, 5,400 acres of marsh and 4,500 acres of upland - some of which was too rocky for cultivation.

As he acquired Pelee Island and other lands in the county, McCormick was developing a vision of himself as a landlord, and he drew up a list of terms to attract settlers. Those locating on his mainland properties in Colchester, Gosfield and Mersea Townships were assured that there would be no rent to be paid for seven years, no tithing, and what were described as only moderate taxes. Furthermore, an occupant could improve his holdings or not, as he pleased.

The regulations for those who set foot on McCormick's own part of paradise, Pelee Island, were a good deal more stringent. On Pelee, cutting timber or hunting or fishing without the proprietor's permission were forbidden, as was allowing livestock to run wild. Dogs doing mischief among the livestock were to be shot, and

¹or rather, Point au Pelee, which in his uninhibited orthography became poynaply.

persons doing the same would pay double the value of any animals other than their own that died in consequence. Matters pertaining to fences and owners' marks on livestock were normally within the purview of a township, which Pelee was not (it was part of Mersea), but by his regulations McCormick arrogated them to himself. Pelee Island was William McCormick's micromonarchy.

McCormick was able to buy Pelee Island and other land at this time principally because his uncle, David McCormick, a linen merchant of Belfast, Ireland, had left £ 2,000 to each surviving member of Alexander McCormick's family, with the residue to William. William freely spent his own legacy, as well as that of other members of his family, even though there were difficulties in disposing of his uncle's estate in Ireland. McCormick was firmly rebuked by the bankers in London, England, who were handling the estate, for drawing on his account before he had funds. (It is possible that the force of the lecture was diminished when McCormick learned, a few months later, that his bankers had become bankrupt themselves.) As a result of his difficulties McCormick left for Ireland to try to settle his affairs. It was while there in 1824 that, in an attempt to attract settlers, he wrote his *Sketch of the Western District*. There is no indication that it succeeded in its objectives, or even that it was used.

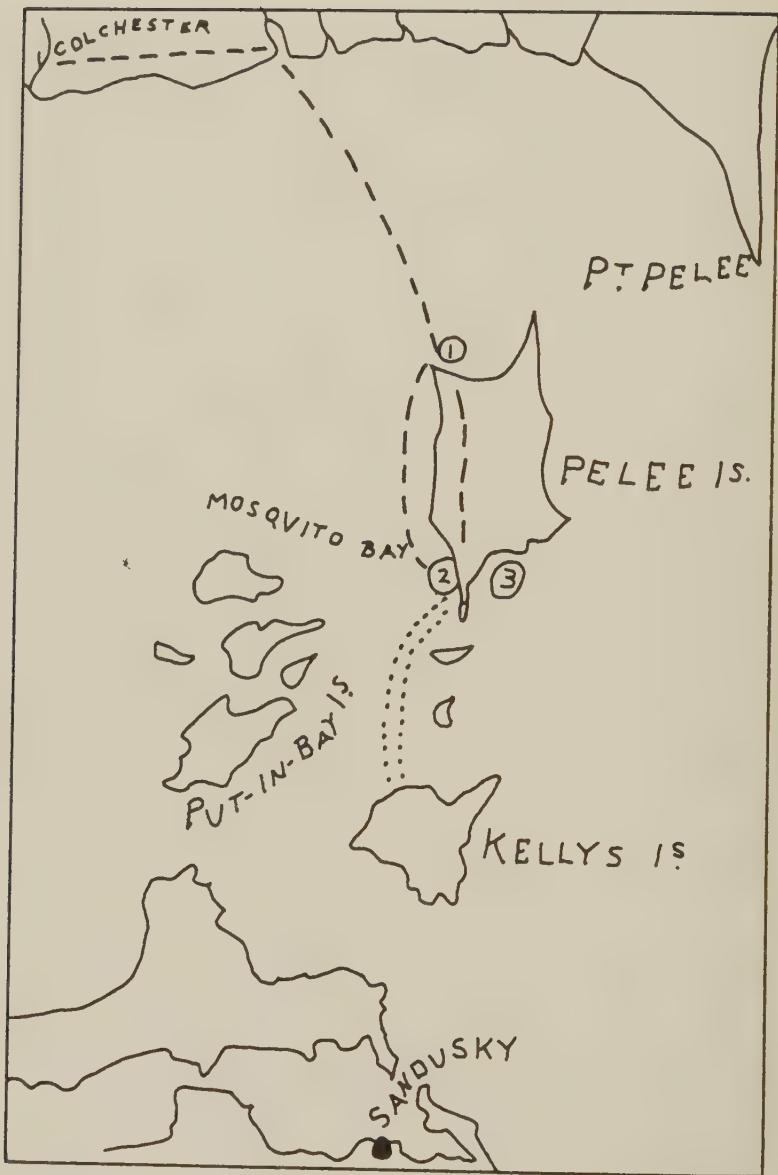
William McCormick had been a shopkeeper-cum-entrepreneur who had served as Colchester postmaster and, from 1816 onward, as a magistrate of the Western District. On April 2, 1834, he was appointed lighthouse keeper on Pelee Island, and that summer the family removed their residence from the mainland to the island.

Once on the island, McCormick turned his attention to lumbering, particularly the export of red cedar to Sandusky, Ohio for use as railroad ties. This business ac-

tivity was suddenly interrupted by the outbreak in 1837 of the Mackenzie Rebellion in Upper Canada. Although the main conflict passed the Western District by, a group of professed "Patriot" supporters of William Lyon Mackenzie in February 1838 crossed over the ice from Sandusky and occupied the island. William McCormick and his family fled to the mainland for refuge. The government's reaction to this invasion of Pelee Island was to replace McCormick and others as officers of the First Essex, and to place the regiment under the command of John Prince of Sandwich. McCormick, long the voice of localism, had not only been chased from his home but was now roused from office in favour of people at the other end of the county! McCormick and the other deposed officers complained bitterly to Lieutenant Governor Sir George Arthur, and they were so hostile to Prince that they even refused to serve under him at the Battle of Windsor in December 1838.

Again the political mentality triumphed, and the difficulty was partially resolved by appointing William McCormick lieutenant colonel of the First Essex - whose limits were western and northwestern Essex - effective April 20, 1839. The insubordination of McCormick and his supporters could not be totally ignored, however, so fines of £ 2.10.0 were levied on each of the offenders. It is doubtful, however, that McCormick ever paid his fine.

William McCormick returned with his family to the island in the summer of 1839, but his health failed and on February 20, 1840, in his fifty-sixth year, he died. Some months before his death he had drawn up a will, in which he left each of his children 300 acres of land on the island. No survey of the island at the time existed, and when the oldest son arranged to have it done in 1847, he totally ignored his father's will and claimed much of the valuable timber land for himself. In retaliation the remaining members of the family initiated a lawsuit, whose result



SKETCH DRAWN BY
DR. F. B. McCORMICK, 22 MAY 1890

*Found in a scrapbook
located in the Burton Historical Collection,
Detroit Public Library*

KEY:

- # 1 - THE OLD McCORMICK HOMESTEAD
- # 2 - BATTLE GROUND AT MOSQUITO BAY
- # 3 - THE OLD FOX HOUSE

**SINGLE DOTTED LINE - ADVANCE OF THE
32ND BRITISH REGIMENT AND OF FOURTEEN
MOUNTED CANADIAN MILITIA**

**DOUBLE DOTTED LINE - PATRIOT
RETREAT**

was a verdict which denied all title of the island to the McCormicks. It was not until 1865 that the government gave the McCormick family legal possession of the island. By that time, however, much of the valuable timber had been stripped by lumbermen from Ohio.

Aside from the affection in which he is still held in South Essex and elsewhere (in part at least as a spirited opponent of Authority in general, and its nearest manifestation at Windsor in particular), William McCormick left as his legacy the manuscript of *A Sketch of the Western District*. Although the "travel book", and the "emigrant guide" are literary forms that flourished late in the eighteenth century and through the first half of the nineteenth, the Western District did not receive much attention. General impressions of Upper Canada in the years following the War of 1812 may be gained from any number of accounts, many of them now tedious, which tried to cater to the Old World taste for the exotic. Or the reader may turn to Anna Jameson's charming account, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*. One traveller who did refer to the district was Dr. John Howison who, in his *Sketches of Upper Canada*, published originally in 1821, described his journey from the Thames River to the Talbot Settlement. However interesting his attempts to display his own refined sensibilities and the superiority of British institutions over the rough society of the frontier, he conveys only limited information about the Western District. Other accounts of the period content themselves with but a brief reference to the productivity of the soil and a superficial reference to the French residents of the area. In quite a different type of work, some information may be gleaned from Robert Gourlay's *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, published in 1822.

McCormick's paper thus stands alone as an account written in the early nineteenth century. First written in Ireland, it was not published in North America until An-

nie Williams (Mrs. William S.) McCormick of Detroit issued a freely transcribed version in 1947. The article attempts an overview of the district with, considering its intent, a predictable stress on the productivity of the land. The type of settler McCormick particularly wanted could perhaps be best seen in his portrayal of the Western District's enthusiasm for the British cause in the War of 1812. This praise of British institutions and stress on the British nature of the district is in distinct contrast with Dr. Howison, who in 1820 saw the area as being entirely Americanized. McCormick thus adds to the small amount of contemporary literature on the early years of the Western District. He also adds the occasional curiosity, as in his reference to Bois Blanc Island, opposite Amherstburg, as Linn Island.

The original of *A Sketch of the Western District* has the rough, much-altered appearance of a first draft, written on both sides of twenty-nine loose sheets of paper measuring approximately eight by twelve inches. The watermark GR 1820 occurs once. The McCormick Family Papers, of which the *Sketch* is a part, by 1947 had been deposited by the family with the George F. Macdonald Collection (then housed in the Windsor Public Library), which subsequently formed the nucleus around which the Hiram Walker Historical Museum developed. In 1974 the Museum's manuscript holdings were loaned to the Archives of Ontario, where they are assured of specialized care in perpetuity. The Museum does, however, retain the original *Sketch* on microfiche, and a copy of the 1947 transcript.

Those who wish to read further about Pelee Island might seek out Marion McCormick Hooper's *Pelee Island Then and Now* (privately published, ca. 1967). An earlier work by Thaddeus Smith entitled *Point au Pelee Island; A Historical Sketch of and an Account of the McCormick Family, Who Were the First White Owners*

on the Island was published at Amherstburg in 1926.

In the present version of McCormick's *Sketch* every effort has been made to preserve the punctuation and spelling of the original, however difficult to read or render in type. The editor is of course resigned to the inevitability of error, and accepts full responsibility.

R. Alan Douglas,
Windsor, Ontario
June 1979

**A Sketch
of
the Western District
of
Upper Canada
being
the Southern extremity
of that interesting Province**

By William McCormick Esq're
a native Canadian
now in Ireland

Written in 1824

For the sake of perspicuity And to avoid repetitions in this hasty but faithful Sketch of my native Country I have considered it expedient to arrange the Subject under the following heads Viz

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| First | Boundaries & Extent |
| Second | Lakes, Rivers & Islands |
| Third | Climate, Soil & produce |
| Fourth | Value of Lands, Labour & Produce |
| Fifth | Roads and Water Communications with the Charges on the Conveyance (or Exportation, as it is called) of Produce to Montreal &c |
| Sixth | Principal Towns Harbours Churches &c |
| Seventh | Inhabitants, their manners & Religion |
| Eighth | Government |
| Ninth | Wild Beasts, Fowls & Fishes |
| Tenth | Hopes entertained respecting the Cultivation of Tobacco |
| Eleventh | Advice and Directions to Emigrants |
| Twelfth | (Some Remarks on the Neighbouring Country compared with the Canadas) |

Having had occasion in the Autumn of 1823 on acc't of some family Concerns to visit Ireland from the North of which my father had Emigrated to Am(eric)a upwards of half a century ago, I was struck with the Numerous population & could not help drawing a comparison between it and that of my native Country, and not less forcibly induced to contrast the means which Canada affords of procuring a permanent provision not only for the present but many succeeding generations with that which this Country appeared to me capable of, & in doing so I naturally dwelt more part(icular) on that portion of it where I reside namely the W. district lying between Lakes *Huron* and *Erie*. To promote emigration of British subjects to a British province appeared also to me an object of no little importance to the Mother Country as well as to the new settled one, and I therefore resolved to submit to intended Emigrants from Ireland a plain unvarnished statement of the claims which Upper Canada has on their first Consideration when they contemplate a long journey in search of a future home for themselves and their families. To commence *author* was a bold resolve in one whose habits of life have not been such as to render it familiar to his mind to have his Name or his works sent forth to the world - but the *motive* overcame all my scruples & I proceeded to delineate with a Strict attention to facts, the scenes which have been familiar to me from my infancy and which I trust may hereafter be familiar to the descendants of hundreds if not thousands of *my fathers Country men*

First. Boundaries and Extent —

The Western district of Upper Canada is bounded on the East by the London District, South by Lake Erie, West by the river Detroit & North west by Lake Saint Claire, the River Saint Claire and Lake Huron. Its length from East to West is upwards of Two hundred Miles and its breadth varies from thirty to two Hundred

Miles.

Second — Lakes Rivers and Islands.

Lakes Erie, Huron and Saint Claire are navigable by large Vessels as are also the Rivers Detroit and Saint Claire, they forming the Straits between the Lakes, — these waters are all fresh and so clear that in some places a fish may be seen at the depth of fifty feet, — the Principal Islands are in Lake Erie and the Detroit River, Point Pelee Island the East and middle Sister in Lake Erie of which Point Pelee Island is the largest, being about twelve Miles in length & from One to Six in breadth & Cont's ab't 30,000 Acres. It has several Inhabitants on it and a large stock of horned Cattle Hogs and Sheep: A great portion of the soil of these Islands is extremely fertile; the other Islands in this Lake within the English boundaries are small but have a fine Soil and are mostly cultivated. These Islands form shelter for Vessels and Boats — There are several small Islands in the St Claire and Detroit Rivers, within the British lines, the most important of which is that called Linn Island¹ which is one Mile in length, is covered with Timber and lies directly in the Mouth of the Detroit River commanding the main Ship Chanel between it and the Town and Garrison of Amherstburg — The Port of Amherstburgh is protected by Linn Island from all Winds & is by that means one of the safest as well as most commodious Harbours in North America.

There is no Want of Harbours in the Rivers Detroit and St. Claire, indeed the whole navigation of the Rivers is so safe that the loss of a Vessel on the rivers has not occurred within my Memory. The principal Inland Rivers in this district are the Thames & The N. & S. Bear Creeks, The former of which empties into L St. Claire, about forty Miles from Sandwich and Detroit. These Rivers are navigable for Vessels of one hundred Tons for thirty Miles from the Mouth and the Thames for large

Boats One hundred miles farther — The Thames and Bear Creek rise in the London District and run parallel with each other a Western Course within from five to Ten Miles, — distant upwards of One Hundred Miles. Independent of these there are a great Number of Streams navigable for Boats —

Third — Climate Soil and Produce.

The Climate of this part of Canada is similar to that of New York, being nearly the same Latitude — More than three fourths of the Year there is a clear Sky and fine Sun, — Winter may be said to commence about the first of January and break up about middle of March. The Snow Seldom falls above a foot Deep and it is desirable that it sh'd continue till that time which it generally does, and thereby is the cause of better Crops of wheat & rye which are sown in autumn, besides the accomod'n it affords for travelling, and doing all kinds of business, there are but very few Days so Cold as to prevent Men from pursuing their out Door Labours, seldom more than two or three Days in the Course of the entire Winter, — Farmers begin to Plough for their Spring crops in the latter End of March — Summer may be said to commence the first of May and End the first of Oct'r. July and August are the warmest Months but not so warm as to prevent labour. The Weather from the first of October till the first of December is generally very fine and Dry and in December mostly fine Sun but frost at Night — The Country is well watered by springs and Small Streams and where those are Deficient Water can always be had by sinking for it — the Soil throughout the entire Western district is very rich — The Lands lying on the borders of Lake Erie have alternately a Clay and Sandy bottom, but clay predominates — Those lying up the Detroit river, Lake St. Clair, River Thames & the two Bear Creeks are with very few Exceptions clay bottom with a rich black Mould in many places above a foot

deep — The surface of the Country may be called level but the banks of the lakes & rivers are high, with the exception of those round Lake St. Claire so that, although the Lands appear to the Eye level, yet their height above the water varies f'm 20 to 100 feet, but this acclivity is so gentle as to be almost imperceptible — for instance, at my residence at Colchester on the bank of Lake Erie ten Miles f'm the Mouth of the River Detroit, the banks are not more than 20 feet high whereas ab't 3 miles farther down the lake the banks are nearly 100 feet high — The Lands around L. St. C. is low & mostly wet & marshy and a great portion of it open planes more adapted to grazing than cultiv'n. The High lands are covered with fine Timber which is used for Building, fencing and fuel — The Timbers most Common are white Red & Black Oaks, Hickory, Ash Walnut, Chesnut, white and Red Elm, Cherry, Beech, Sugar Maple and Soft Maple — of Sugar Maple there is great abundance and its Sugar when carefully manufactured is equal to that of the West Indies — The produce of the Lands are per English Acre — Wheat from thirty to forty Bushels Winchester Measure weight about Sixty Pounds —. Indian Corn forty to Eighty Bushels — Potatoes, two to five hundred Bushels and of equal quality with those I have seen since my arrival in this Country — Tobacco One thousand to two thousand Pounds weight — Oats, Rye and Turnips in proportion. Hops might also be raised in abundance being found in many places wild and of good quality. Apples, Peaches, Pears and Plums, are raised in great abundance and of the finest flavour. Grapes are frequently but not commonly raised in the open air, but the circumst'ce of wild grapes being found in great abundance, is a proof that by proper cultiv'n they might become an important article of Commerce; Gooseberries & currants are cultivated in every Garden — Cyder is the Common drink—Musk-Mellons—Water-Mellons and Cucumbers

are raised in great Quantities & with little labour.

Fourth — **Value of Lands, Labour & Produce** —

Good Lands in a wild State may be bought at from twenty to forty Shillings per Acre according to their Situations — Lands of inferior qualities may be purchased much cheaper — Government will give to a poor Man not able to pay fees (being a *British Subject*) fifty Acres, subject to settling Duties which are to build a log-house, clear the road in front of his lot & clear for Cultivation five acres of Land. The Government fees for a lot of One hundred Acres, are twelve Pounds Sterling & they rise gradually on a specific scale accord'g to the No. of acres granted up to £ 300 for 1200 acres which is the greatest Qty now granted to one individual. Labouring Men will be hired readily from Twenty-five to fifty Shillings per Month and found — Women from fifteen to Twenty and found — Black Smiths, Stone-Masons, Bricklayers, Carpenters Taylors and Weavers from three Shillings & Nine pence to five Shillings per Day. Wheat sells pr Bushel (weighing from 56 to 60 pounds) from three Shillings and Nine pence to five Shillings — Indian Corn from Two Shillings & Sixpence to three Shillings & nine pence per Bushel — Tobacco from thirty to forty Shillings per Hundred Pounds — WorkHorses from five to fifteen Pounds pr. head — Work Oxen from Eight to Sixteen Pounds per pair—Milch Cows from three to five Pounds per Head — Sheep from Ten to fifteen Shillings per Head — Wool from One Shilling and Eight pence to Two Shillings and Six pence pr Pound — Beef and Pork from Twelve Shillings & Sixpence to Twenty Shillings per Hundred — The Above Prices apply to Sept 1823 —

Fifth — **Roads and Water Communications with the Charges on Exportation to Montreal.**

The Roads as may be expected in a new Country and particularly in newly improved Places are not very good but Still passable — During the hard Weather in Winter

they are Excellent, — a Horse will carry a Load on a Sledge or Sleigh from fifty to Sixty Miles in a day — There are two great Roads leading from Amherstburgh to York which is the Seat of Government, the One along the Coast of Lake Erie, for thirty Miles, where it meets the Talbot Road, which continues down the Coast of the Lake until it crosses the Grand River near the Head of Lake Ontario, the other passes up the Detroit River through Sandwich up Lake St. Claire and the River Thames until it falls in with the other Road at the Grand River two hundred Miles from Amherstburgh thence continues through York, Kingstown, Montreal and Quebec for a distance of Nine hundred Miles — The Water Communications to the Sea Board, are through Lake Erie either by, Steam vessel(s?) (which make(s?) a trip between Buffalo and Detroit every Eight Days from May to December) or by the Vessels which are very numerous on the Lake thence down the Niagara River passing the falls nine Miles over Land to Queenstown, there take lake Shipping in a Steam Boat or other Vessels for Kingstown and thence down the St. Lawrence to Montreal & Quebec — The passage in fine Weather is frequently made in Eight days from Amherstburgh to Montreal a distance of nearly Eight hundred Miles or the Journey to New York may be made in the same time, — When the Northern Canal is finished through the State of New-York which is expected to be next Summer, Passengers may go from Europe by Water to the *Sue* of St. Marys on Lake Huron, passing Amherstburgh and Detroit in the way, a distance from New York of nearly fourteen hundred Miles —

A Canal at Niagara to pass the falls where at present there is a land carriage of Nine Miles and a like canal from Montreal to Lachine, which is but a few Miles is all that is required to make a Water Communication from Montreal to the most Western parts of Upper Canada,

and it is expected that these works will Soon be commenced, — The Expense of convey'g produce from Amherstburg to Montreal is about three Shillings per Hundred, from (to?) New York rather more, but as soon as the Northern Canal is completed it will be much less to Newyork —

Sixth — Principal, Towns, Harbours Churches &c —

Amherstburgh and Sandwich are the principal, neither of which is very Considerable but The town of Amherstburgh is a thriving place — It is situate at the Mouth of the Detroit River in the Co'y of Essex and has a very handsome appearance on Entering the Mouth of the River — The Garrison of the same name Commands the principal Ship Chanel — Sandwich is the County Town — There is at each of these places a Church of England Church & Clergyman also a Catholic Church & Clergyman. There two more Protestant Churches in this District, and One Catholic Church, — The one a Wooden framed building in the Town of Chatham on the River Thames, the other of Stone thirteen Miles below Amherstburgh in the Township of Colchester, none of which have as yet Resident Clergymen — There are also some Methodist Chappels in the District —

Amherstburg contains a number of Good houses and many of the Inhabitants are highly Respectable — Sandwich does not contain so many Inhabitants, but many respectable People and good Houses — The Jail, Court House, and Church are very handsome Brick Buildings, particularly the Church.

Seventh — Inhabitants their Manners & Religion

The Original Inhabitants of this District were the Autaway & Taway Indians² but they having sold the most of their lands to the British there are now but few of them permanently resident in the District those that are remaining reside on Lake Huron and a few Taways at Point Pelee but the Lands the last named live on have

been sold to Government. These Indians with the exception of a few are all Savages tho' they believe in a Supreme being; they live principally by hunting fowling and fishing — They Raise some Indian Corn and make some Maple Sugar in the Season, they are with few Exceptions fond of Spirituous Liquors and in their drunken Broils frequently kill each other and the only punishment which they dread for such Crimes is the resentment of the Relatives of the deceased; their Government is the advice of their Chiefs, who, act as Fathers and Leaders, the disobedience of whom is disgraceful — they are sometimes guilty of petty thefts tho' they are by no means troublesome to the white Settlers, with whom they are on friendly terms & to whom they are often very useful, and hospitable, when occasion requires it. They get a Yearly Annuity from the British Gov't. for the Lands they have sold them, they are not considered as warlike as the Hurons and Shawneys but they have always been true to the British Government, and contributed not a little to the preservation of the province, when attacked by the American Armies during the late War, and when the British Squadron was captured on Lake Erie, and the consequent retreat of the Brit Army took place, they refused to accede to the terms of peace offered them by the Am'n. Gov't. which were not unfavorable but chose to follow the fortunes of the British Army whose prospects at that time were very gloomy thus forsaking their native Country and continuing with the British until the Peace — A Huron tribe is settled with a few Shawneys on a reserve Seven Miles square on the Detroit River which was given to them by the Autaways many Years ago *for a resting Place*, they having been driven from their native Country near Montreal by the Mohawks — The Hurons are Roman Catholics and the most of them give Strict Attendance to their Church, some at Sandwich and Some at Amherstburgh, they are

much fairer than the Autaways, many of their Young Women as fair Skinned as Dark Europeans — they do not hunt much, but Cultivate their Land and raise Stock, — they Manufacture the Maple Sugar equal if not superior to the best Muscovado — They are good and peaceable Neighbours, very hospitable, are Governed by their Chiefs much in the same manner as has been related of the Autaways, & they are cleanly in their Houses and persons — Their Houses are Built of wood, & have Glass Windows and Brick Chimneys, they are the bravest and most warlike of all the Indians though the Shawneys in that respect, are not much their inferiors; The latter are not so civilized, but are also a fair and Handsome people being light and active — Both these Tribes stood firmly by the British Arms during the late War — There is also a Village of the Delawa Tribe settled on the Thames on a reserve; they profess the Moravian Religion and have their Minister resident with them — They give a regular attendance to their meetings and are much civilized. They live much in the same manner as the Hurons — All those Indians continue to follow their native fashion of Dress excepting a few of the Huron Women, who sometime substitute Shoes & Stockings for the Mockasins and Leggins, and also wear their Strouds or Petticoats longer than formerly and wear a loose gown over their chemise or rather shirt. The Young Women are fond of rich Dresses — The men are also substituting a surtout coat in place of the Blanket which they formerly wore, thus shewing a gradual advancement to civilization — The next Inhabitants in point of Seniority are the Descendants of the old french Settlers who reside principally on the Detroit River, this Settlement is upwards of 100 Years Old — Their farms according to old Canadian Custom Run out but three acres wide, fronting the Rivers, but extending backw'ds. 40 or 50 making f'm 120 to 150 acres.³ Their Houses and Barns are neat, with

Orchards on every farm — it is only within these five or Six Years back they thought of putting the Manure of their Stables on their Land, but to get Rid of it hauled it on the river when frozen that it might be carried away on the breaking up of the Ice — They are all Catholics and are a friendly, polite peaceable and happy People the Young females are very handsome and many of them are intermarried with Europeans and mostly the first People of the Country, the difference of Religion forming no obstruction, they are very loyal and have no desire of becoming Republicans — The Third in Seniority are the U.E. Loyalists and their Descendants (of whom I am one) with a mixture of Europeans and Emigrants from the United States. Lands were given to the last description as well as to Europeans before the late War, but the few that proved disloyal during that period were prim'y of the latter description, which caused the encouragement theretofore held out to them by the British Gov't. to be discontinued, — th(e)y are settled principally on the River Thames, the River St. Claire, & at Sandwich and Amherstburgh — Below Amherstburg for 30 Miles on Lake Erie, the Inhabit's are generally the descendants of the U.E. Loyalists, & a few of this Stock are Scattered in the new Settlem'ts among the Emigrants from Europe. They are generally well Settled, mostly all Landholders and those that follow farming are considered good ones, they are free generous and hospitable particularly to Strangers not apt to go to law nor venture much at any kind of Risk — The Mercantile Men of this Country are mostly independant tho' there are not many that are rich — The Religion of these last descriptions (?) is of the Church of England Methodists and Babtists (sic)—There are a few Presbyt'n Families, but being scattered over the Country they have no clergyman and go to the Church of England, which is provided for without any Expençe to the Hearers — The Clergymen are all Missionaries and

have a Provision out of the Clergy Lands which is given to the Church in Lieu of all Tythings — all other Professions maintain their own Clergy—There are no quarrellings or Heart Burnings about Religion in this Country such as I have sincerely regretted to observe since my arrival in Ireland () — Catholics and Protestants live on the most friendly terms, and in all worldly transactions a Mans Religion or profession is not thought of every Man being at liberty to worship God as he thinks proper, without being found fault with by his Neighbours — The last in Seniority are the European Emigrants who have come out within these Six or Seven Years past, they are English Irish & Scotch and are Settled on Talbot Road,⁴ on the Banks of Lake Erie, on the two Bear Creek⁵ & the River St.C. and already form a considerable portion of the Inhabitants of the *Western District* — The most of them came out very poor and for a time were a Burthen to the old Inh'ts but at present they have mostly become Indep't have got a Suff'cy of their farms Cleared & under Cultiv'n & have Some Stock, and I have reason to Know that they are happy & contented with their present situation & future prospects — Their Religion is Protest't Cath. Presbyt'n & Methodist, Yet Such is their cordiality that Each Class attends the Relig's Worship of the others as Opport'y occurs without any app'ce of Jealousy —

There is in every District what is termed a District School, where the higher Classes of Educ'n are taught and the Teacher allowed a salary of £ 100 p ann: from the Legislature — A College is about to be erected at York for which some Provision has been made by the Legislature but it is still in its Infancy. In Every Township Town or Place where the Inhabitants have built a School House and Employed a Teacher capable of teaching the lower Branches of Education and can Certify that Twenty Scholars attend such Teach'r is en-

titled to Receive from Govern't a salary of £12.10.0 p. Annum — These regulations are yet in their Infancy, but bid fair to do well —

Eighth — Government —

Among the many misconceptions or prejudices which I have met with in Ireland respecting Canada none appeared to me so glaring as those on the subject of the Gov't & the Church — of the latter I have already treated — of the former I must say that I have met with very few Irishmen who hold a proper or correct notion of the Gov't of the Canadas. — They seem to look on that of the U.S. as infinitely preferable, & to consider Canada as Governed in the same manner as Ireland is — nothing can be more absurd — There we have no overgrown Landlords who direct the suffrages of their tenantry in the Choice of their representatives — No! there every Man votes for whom he pleases, or rather for the man who pleases him by his Conduct *in & out of the house* — there we have more *equality* than is to be found in Ireland — and more *national liberty* without so much of the licenciousness of *Thoughts (?) and Equality* as may be found in every part of the U.S. The reason for this must be obvious to every observer — We have not that Gewgaw of liberty of which the Citizens of the U.S. boast so much — *The Sovereignty of the People*. We have I honestly beleive (sic) more of the genuine principles of "*the British Constitution*", than is to be found at the present day in Great B. or Ireland & fewer of *its abuses than* are to be met with there. Our Magistracy is not so much above the people as to look *down* on them — whilst they are chosen from among the most influential Members of the community *without regard to religious opinions*, and their commissions & their duties place them so far above the people around them, as to create a due deference & respect for their authority, & the Law vests them with suffic't powers to protect & sup-

port that authority should any individual attempt to scowl upon it — that however seldom happens —

I consider it a most Essential matter for an Intended Emigrant to be as far as practicable Acquainted with the laws & Gov't of the Country to which he may look forward as the future residence of himself & his descendants & therefore I shall be as minute as the succinctness of the plan I have laid down for this *Sketch* will permit in treating this head.

The Constit'n & Government are modelled by that of Great Britain — The Lieutenant Governor is the Kings Representative and removeable at the Kings Pleasure — The Executive & legislative Councils are appointed by the King the former during pleasure the latter during life — These appointments are generally made from among the most respectable men in the province. — The Executive Co'l is analagous to the British Privy Co'l — the Legislative Co'l to the B.H. of L. The House of Assembly which is analagous to the B.H. of Commons is elected every four years, by the votes of every Freeholder worth *forty* shillings p Annum and the Members are generally chosen from among the Farming interest — It Consists of 40 Members. Without the consent of this body, no laws can be passed, and all *money Bills* must originate with them the British Parliament only reserving the regulations of foreign trade & navigation but money raised off the Colony must be at the disposal of the House of Assembly — The last British *Trade & Navigation Act* made for the Canadas which among other regulations *made Quebec a free port* was much approved of by the Canadians — In Upper Canada there is one Chief Justice and two *Puisne* Judges, an Attorney & a Solicitor General — There are ten districts in which Courts of Justice are held. The three Judges make a Circuit to each of the Districts once a year and hold a Court of Oyer & Terminer Nisi Prius & General Gaol delivery

— Independent of this Court there is in each district a Quarter Sessions & District Court four times a year — Also in most Townships the Magistrates hold a Court twice every Month for the recovery of small debts under five pounds —

Lands are granted by the Lieutenant Governor & the Executive Council in free and common soccage and free of all claims for tithing — No patents will be given out of late years without proof of the Settling duty having been performed for which purpose and the greater convenience of Settlers there are Land-Boards held in each district which have the power of locating any q'ty of land not exceeding 100 Acres which Gov't confirms on proof as above.

The Western District sends 3 Representatives to the House of Assembly and it is permitted by Law as the population encreases to send more & there are also one Member of the Executive and one of the Legis. Co'l appointed out of the W. D. — Every District is divided according to its population into Regiments of Militia — and Officers are appointed from amongst the Inhabitants by the Lieut't Governor who is Commander of the Militia — They are also governed by a Militia law of the Provincial Parliament — It is provided in that Law that no Militia man can be subjected to corporal punishment. The Senior Officer of every Regiment is bound by this Law to muster it once every year — for the purpose of drilling — Every male from 16 years of age to 50 is bound to attend such muster and also to defend the Country if invaded by an enemy — excepting Parish Ministers — *one miller* to each mill and *one Schoolmaster* to each school — This militia was found of very essential service during the late war with the United States — They are all good marksmen and good woodsmen — and in general they showed a determination to defend the Country to the last Extremity — They

were particularly serviceable as they were often *soldiers one week* and *Farmers the next*, cultivating their lands, without which the Country could not have held out long — When the British army retreated from the Westward there were many of the Militia men who left their friends and families & followed the fortunes of the Army continuing with it until the Peace — not as *Soldiers* but as *Volunteers* — *only serving as soldiers on emergencies* and at other times labouring for their living, for the Militia is only paid during the time of actual Service — when they receive the same pay as the regular troops —

Ninth — Wild Beasts Fowls & Fishes —

The principal Wild Beasts are Bears, Deer, Racoons and Rabbits — which are very plenty — are excellent food and the skins are worth as follows — Good Bears — 20/- Deer — 5 shillings — Racoons 2/6. There are also Wolves Foxes and Wild Cats, but these Except the Foxes are very rare in old settled places — They are caught *for the sake of destroying them & their fur* — They are not eatable — The Wolf skin is worth 5/- and his scalp 20/- a Bounty to that amount being payable by the Treasurer of the County for destroying them — They are a thieving sly animal and are seldom seen except when caught in traps — Their depredations are upon young pigs and sheep — The Fox also steals young pigs geese & fowls — Their skin is worth from 2/6 to 5/- Independent of the above there is a great quantity of *Black Squirrels* which are fine eating & the shooting of them affords good sport. It may be well to remark that there are no *Game Laws* in this Country so that every man may use his Gun among all kinds of Wild Game — There are Beavers Otters Fishers Mincks & Musk Rats — The Beaver is most generally to be found along the waters of Lake Huron — The others are to be found in all parts of the Country — the fur of all these animals is very valuable —

The *Fowl* are Turkeys Pheasants Grouse & Quails, all

which are excellent food and excepting the Grouse are very plenty — There are also Eagles Turkey Buzzards Ravens Crows Hawks & Owls — none of which are made use of for eating. The *Water* fowls are Swans Grants Geese and a great variety of Ducks — Every spring and fall the Rivers Lakes Marshes and inlets are covered with these Waterfowl — and particularly about the Waters of the River St. Clare — The Turkeys Pheasants and Quails come frequently into the farmers' fields and even into their barnyards —

The *Fishes* are the Masconundia *Sturgeon*, Salmon Trout, Pickerell, Whitefish, Pike, Catfish, Black & White Bass besides a great variety of inferior fishes — All the Waters abound with the different fishes and they are caught in every little stream and inlet — The Masconundia Pike and Pickerell run up as far as they can find water to float them — The former is the finest fish I ever tasted either of salt or fresh water — White fish & Pickerell are salted and sent into the United States for some hundreds of miles where they bring a high price — There are numerous kinds of Turtles in the Waters some of which are good eating.

Tenth — Hopes entertained respecting the Cultiv'n of Tobacco

It has been only recently discovered that Tobacco could be cultivated with advantage in Canada or that the Climate was adapted for the Growth of it, *being but 3 years Since the first Sample was sent to the Montreal Market* and then only two Small Hhds; The quality was so much approved of that the Succeeding Year about 30 were sent and last year about 100 — *all of which was raised in the Western District* — of these last I myself sent ten, and the Acc't received in Sept. last (when I left home) was that the Inspector at Montreal reported it to be one fifth superior in value to that brought from the U.S. Conseq'y the cultiv'n of it was proceeding on a

much more extensive scale throughout the townships of Colchester, Maldon, Gossfield, Mersee & Chatham all in the Western District — but principally in the two former and I think I may venture to assert that in a very short space of time indeed we shall not only be able to supply the Montreal Market, but with the Support which we look for from the British Govement be likewise Enabled to export it to *this* Country. As a Colony we have already a preference afforded us on the Export'n of our produce, by its being admitted into the Mother Country *at a lower Duty, than that of foreigners*, & we have reason to hope that upon a proper representation to the British Govt. we may obtain a Reduction of the Duty on the Importation into this Kingdom, of Tobacco *the growth of Canada*. When the last Colonial Trade Bill was passed by the British Parlt., had it been known, that Tobacco *would have been cultivated in Canada to advantage* we feel no doubt but that the Same if not a more liberal allowance would have been made upon that as upon Other Canadian produce and if such had been the case, or whenever it may take place there can be no Doubt but that it will enhance the Value of landed property in U.C. and particularly in the *Western & London* districts to a very great extent and when it is Consid'd that the *appalling* price of Tob. in this Country arises chiefly from the heavy Duties on importation — and if it be taken into Consd'n (as it must be in the mind of Every man who considers the Subject a *National & not merely a financial* point of view) that those duties were imposed on it as an article, *solely* the produce of a *foreign & by no means a friendly* power — and when it is (as we trust the B.G. will shortly feel that it can be) demonstrated that Tobacco can be *successfully* cultivated in one of *her own dependencies*, *Great Britain* will feel it as well *her own* Int'st as a duty she owes to her children, to extend the fostering hand of protection, to

this which bids fair *under her parental care*, to be the *Staple Article* of U.C.

In the cultiv'n. of Tob'o no settler should undertake to raise more than four acres with't being well assured of his ability to procure assistance from a number of hands at certain Seasons which help Women & Children can perform. The Method of cultivating and curing Tobacco is very easily attained. A Man seeing it once performed must be very weak in Intellect if he could not do it again without a guide. It is thought that it is only in the *Western & London* Districts that it can be raised to advantage owing to the frost setting In earlier and continuing longer in the more N. & N.E. districts than in the W & L districts. A Small Kind of Tobacco was begun to be raised some years ago in Lower Canada, but it is much inferior to that now raising in U.C. and only used for Smoking —

I have Seen Some Samples of Virginia Tobacco Since I came to Belfast and am well convinced I had several Hhds of equally good quality last Year at the Montreal Market —

Since writing the above Article I perceive this day (2nd March) that advices have been rec'd f'm Québec announcing that "Although last year had been unfavorable for the Cultiv'n of Tob'o in the *W.D.* 300 Hhds of that Article w'd be ready for Shipment in the Spring" — I make this quotation to rectify an Error into which the press has fallen — It is stated to be the *W.D.* of *L.C.* whereas in fact it is not *L.C.* but the very district now under my present Consid'n — the *W.D.* of *U.C.*

Eleventh — **Advice & Directions to Emigrants**

A Man with Money going to Canada Should lay in at least three or four Years Stock of Wearing apparel, particularly coarse clothing & Bedding but no more House Furniture than can be packed in trunks chiefly confined to a few Pots & Kettles — all of which should be well

packed to protect them from Breakage. He should leave this Country in Ap'l that he may reach his intended place of abode so early in the Season as to prepare for a Crop the next Season, or to put in fall wheat if he gets improved lands the same season. He should if he can have recommendatory Letters to some person of respectability in that part of the Country to which he is going, on whose advice he should rely on his Arrival and then not to be headstrong in his own opinions for he ought to consider that the well informed inhabitants of the Country, are more Capable of giving him directions than he is to direct himself until he has the advantage of Experience when he will in his turn be enabled to direct new Settlers. — If he has money to spare after providing the beginning of his Stock of Horned Cattle a Horse Oxen Pigs & Sheep which ought to be his first object after having obtained a House to live in — It would be to his Int't to look out for a good improved farm in a good pleasant Situation which he may purchase Cheap and by so doing have a Home at once immediately put in a Crop to have every thing ready to his Hand to commence farming & raising Stock — His own Cloth and Linen, whereby with prudence he may have every thing within himself, Salt & Iron excepted neither of which is dear. He may then purchase Wild Lands for his family wh'h will be ready for them when they grow up and he will then know how to clear them off better than a New Comer can do, but the Man who has not Money to purchase improved Lands can draw from Government or purchase from Individuals if he thinks proper. Such Men should get on their Lands as soon as possible, raise a Small Log-House to put his family in which he can do all within himself with about Ten or 12 Days labour — His next care sh'd be to provide himself with a few Months provisions, a Cow, a Sow and a few Sheep, set his wife to spinning and himself to clear a piece of Land to put in a Crop as soon

as possible — If he has no Neighbours to show him how to do his work, he should imitate the most industrious natives of the Country — If he has none such near him he should hire himself to one for a short time that will set him to work with People who are clearing Land that he may get into the Method of Clearing, at least so far as to use the Chopping Axe expertly. The same advice applies to Young Men without families & of slender means. The Tools necessary for a Small farmer to commence his work with are as follows viz Chopping Axes — 2 Iron Wedges $2\frac{1}{2}$ (lb?) each — 1 Sett Plough Irons 40 lb w't — 1 sett Harrow Teeth 15 lb Sett — 1 Log Chain, 15 lb w't which he had better provide in Canada for I doubt his getting those articles made in this Country to answer his purpose. 1 Brush Hook all of which we will get of a good description for about £ 6 — There are Some other Tools which a farmer would find useful which he might take from this Country, and they would come the cheaper to him — A Cross Cut saw a Whipsaw & Hand Saw Augers Gimblets and half a Doz. good English Hoes, Spade & Shovel & two or 3 good English Scythes — Mechanics should take their tools along with them if not too heavy and bulky — I think a great many adopt a bad plan by bringing their families a part of the way and then leaving them until the(y) look out for a place of Residence — In my Opinion they would do much better to pursue their Journey all together until they get a resting place perhaps for life — They should take their passage in a good vessel for Montreal or Quebec and be sure she is not crowded with Passengers & they should lay in their own Stock of Provisions — If A few families were going together it might be as well to Charter a Vessel and the Room they did not want they might take in Cargo, by which means I have known people to have their Passage free from England to Quebec. When arrived at Montreal — They should then lay in provisions for Kingston, and hire a

Boat to convey them there & from thence Take Steam Boat or a good Vessel for Queenstown purchasing their own provisions, They will then have to travel nine Miles — overland — for which purpose they will find a Number of Waggons for hire—to convey them to () from which they should take a Boat to Fort Erie, and then purchasing provisions again take their passage for any part of Lake Erie or the Detroit River — They may get their passage, finding their own Provisions & bedding for about 10/- across either Lake Erie or Ontario —

The first object for a farmer in that Country is to get himself a good Stock & to make his own Woollens & Linens for which purpose there are different factories in the Country — A Man settling on New Lands may raise Stock with very little Expencc — There are some Iron Works with Materials for many more, and also for Salt —

Twelfth — Some Remarks on the Neighbouring Country compared with the Canadas —

Part of the State of Ohio and the Territory of Michigan border close on the western parts of Canada being only divided by the Rivers and Lakes and from repeated intercourse with the Inhabitants & frequently travelling through their Country, I think I have as perfect a knowledge of their Laws and Customs as of those of my own Country, and I must say that I conscientiously consider the Canadas far the best Country for a Man to mend his fortune and live in peace under good and wholesome laws enjoying as much Liberty as is consistent with Civilization and public Safety, and it is my Candid Opinion, that whilst the Citizens of the United States enjoy the *name of liberty* which is a high sounding word and one under which the greatest abuses are perpetrated — that the People of Canada enjoy *the reality* and are *as likely to continue to enjoy it*, as any other People on that Continent; if they do not it is their

own faults as they have the means of its Continuance in their own hands — a strong proof that they think so is that during the late War and particularly at the commencement of it, when in many places with some or but few Troops the whole Population turned out, despising the Proclamations threats & fair Promises of the American Generals & succeeded in defending the Country against very superior numbers of the American Troops —

A Man going to the United States must *have his Eyes open* (as the phrase is) if he intends to get on in Business or gain property, tho' he will at the Same time find the general Character of the Inhab'ts hospitable and generous, but if he gets a piece of Land in that Country and it be good he must pay as much for it, *as any American Speculator thinks it is worth*, — and of them there are not a few. In fact the old Countrymen emigrating to the U.S. have little better prospects before them than to become hirelings, and get something better Wages and better treatment than in this Country but their prospects of becoming indep't Landholders must be very distant — The European Emigrants to the U.S. often become drudges for the Country and serve to fill up their Army & Navy when Men are wanted and I can safely assure the Man of Money who wishes to become a Landhold'r that he can procure *Three* or *four* hundred Acres of land in U. Canada for the Same Sum that one hundred would cost him in the United States — In Every part of that Country that I am acquainted with the Taxes & Assessments on Property are double if not treble what they are in Canada and besides it very frequently occurs in the United States that a Man on purchasing Lands is most grossly deceived by getting bad Titles — in Canada it is quite different for by going to the Expence of the Registry Office in the district where the land lies, where he will imme'y at the Expense of a few Shillings know

whether the Title is good or bad, or who it lies in. Lands are *as yet* mostly held direct from the Crown *free for Ever of all Rents and Tithings* —

In the *Western District* which is partially settled throughout there are but two Att'ys or Lawyers & they can hardly live by their Profession, such is the peaceable and quiet State of that Country — whilst in the Territory of Michigan which has not as many Inhabitants they have something like 20 Att'ys & as many Judges — I do not mean to say that the Inhabitants of that part of the united States are a bad or wicked people, but they are much fonder of law than the Canadians and do not live in the s[ame?] peace & harmony with each other, but they have a more enterprizing Spirit than the Canadians generally, and for an active trading Character it may be a preferable Country, but Upper Canada in my Opinion is the surest part of the World [I have Any] Knowledge of for an honest & Industrious Man to provide an Independence for himself and a rising family and it is asserted that the day is at no great distance when it will be great & powerful populous and Commere'l Country and whilst I sincerely hope they may ever remain under the protection of the Mother Country, I see no probability or likelihood that they will do so — The true spirit of English liberty is growing up with the Inhabitants & I repeat that I look on the British Constitution when Kept undefiled as preferable to any other form of Government in the World —

NOTES

1. Bois Blanc Island.
2. Both names appear to mean the Ottawa Indians.
3. The word acre, used in a linear sense, meant the length of one side of a square acre.
4. Present Highway 3.
5. Little Bear Creek empties into the St. Clair River delta, east of St. Anne's Island. Big Bear Creek is the Sydenham River.



WILLIAM McCORMICK'S LAND HOLDINGS IN ESSEX COUNTY, 1805-1839

J. Clarke, Department of Geography, Carleton University

In the period 1805 to 1840 William McCormick acquired 2,247 acres of land in the townships of Colchester, Mersea and Sandwich. All but 490 acres of this were purchased; the 490 acres of lots 78 in Front Concession of Colchester Township, lot 7 in the Gore of Colchester and lot 19 in the Second Concession of Mersea being acquired by Crown Patent. In addition to the lands acquired in this period McCormick held three mortgages on 714 acres of land in Mersea Township owned by W. Elliot and E. Reynolds. One of the lots (200 acres) acquired by McCormick was obtained on a Sheriff's Deed issued by William Hands for the exceedingly low price of £ 4.1.7½. Five lots were obtained from four people with the surname McDonnell; the rest from separate individuals. The average price paid by McCormick at this time was £ 0.401 per acre (Table 1). This was generally much lower than the average price paid for land in Essex at this time. However much of this land was obtained in Mersea Township and was generally of a poorer quality than what might have been obtained elsewhere in the County.

Table 1
Land Transactions of William McCormick in
Essex County

Period	Acreage Acquired	Total Price	Price per Acre in Pounds	Acreage Sold	Total Price	Price per Acre
1805-1809	-					
1810-1814	-					
1815-1819	290	Patent Fee	-	90	N/A	
1820-1824	1290	£ 450	0.348	500	£ 500.25	1.00
1825-1829	267	£ 474.50	1.676	600	£ 475	0.79

1830-1834	200	£ 4.08	0.02	881	£ 745	0.845
1835-1840	200	Patent Fee	-	200	£ 1050	5.25
TOTAL	2247*	901.58	0.401	2271	2770.2	1.22

Source: Public Archives of Ontario, Abstract Index to Deeds

McCormick sold 2,271 acres in the same period. The records indicate that he still held 291 acres which had not been sold when he died in 1839. These figures indicate that he "controlled" 2,662 acres, that is more than he had actually acquired. The difference of 415 acres may well be a comment upon deficiencies in the Abstract Index to Deeds, upon which this analysis is based. McCormick leased 290 acres to Matthew Elliott and disposed of his land to his family and to a number of well known local personages such as J. Prince, Wendal Wigle and the Park Brothers. In addition he mortgaged four pieces of property to one J. Gordon. The average price obtained for his land in the period up to 1839 was £ 1.22. Even allowing for carrying charges McCormick did well in his land speculations. As Table 2 shows McCormick was most active in the period 1820 to 1829 when he bought and sold 22 property parcels.

Table 2
Total Purchases and Sales by Year

1805-1809	2
1810-1814	0
1815-1819	3
1820-1824	12
1825-1829	10
1830-1834	7
1835-1840	5

Source: Public Archives, A.I.D.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of McCormick's land holdings in the County. The map does not do justice to his activity because he often sold, re-purchased and re-sold the same property at a substantial profit each time.

As can be seen his activity was limited to three townships. A comparison of the distribution of his lots with the physical environment suggests that he was unable or uninterested in discriminating poor agricultural land from good agricultural land (Table 3).

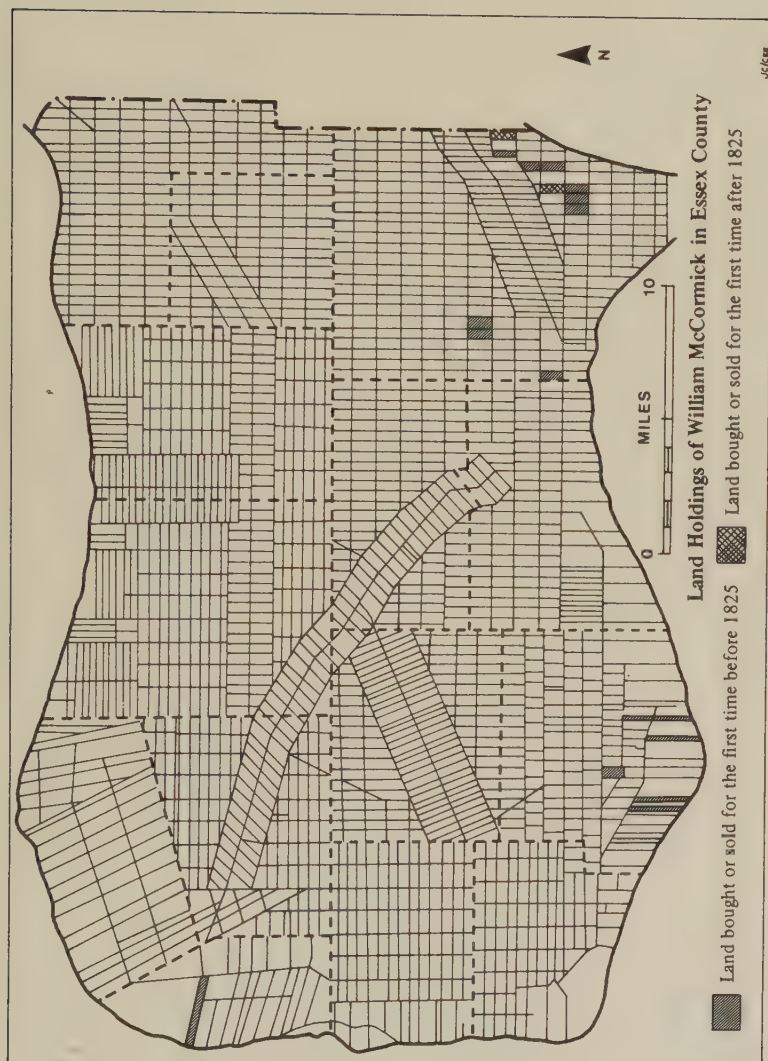
	No. of Lots		
	Colchester	Mersea	Sandwich
Heavily Textured, Poorly Drained	-	6	-
Heavily Textured, Imperfectly Drained	3	-	-
Medium Textured, Poorly Drained	3	-	-
Light Textured, Poorly Drained	-	4	2
Light Textured, Well Drained	-	1	-
TOTAL	6	11	2

Source: P.A.O., A.I.D.

Of his 19 property parcels only one was on light textured, well drained land but he did not actually own this lot but only held a mortgage on the lot. It may of course be that he placed greater emphasis on accessibility to the Talbot Road and if so he can be regarded as agriculturally rational, given the state of the County at this time. Alternatively, if his motive was to acquire land for example for its cedar, his choice was wholly logical.

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